

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 /088 W
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R 211200Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2981
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 7479

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PK, MORG, PINT
SUBJECT: A PROFILE OF GENERAL ZIA

1. GENERAL MOHAMMED ZIA-UL-HAQ IS A STUDY IN CONTRASTS. HE IS THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN PAKISTAN AND SEEMS SINGULARLY INTENT ON DIVESTING HIMSELF OF THAT POWER. HE IS A STRICT DISCIPLINARIAN WHO PRIDES HIMSELF ON HIS LONG MILITARY CAREER, YET IS ALSO KNOWN FOR HIS INFORMALITY AND INDIFFERENCE TO RANK OUTSIDE THE MILITARY. HE SPEAKS WITH EASE, FAMILIARITY AND CONFIDENCE ABOUT MODERN MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND TACTICS BUT IS, AT THE SAME
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TIME, INTENSELY AND FUNDAMENTALLY DEDICATED TO ISLAM AND ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES.

2. THE CONTRAST IN ZIA BETWEEN JULY FIFTH AND JULY 14TH, WHEN HE GAVE A FULL-SCALE PRESS CONFERENCE, IS STRIKING. WHEN HE ADDRESSED THE NATION IMMEDIATELY AFTER ASSUMING POWER, ZIA WAS STILTED AND

ILL-AT-EASE. BY THE TIME OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE, HE WAS POISED, WITTY, INFORMAL AND OBVIOUSLY COMPLETELY IN COMMAND. HE DEFTLY HANDLED QUESTIONS AND SEEMED TO ENJOY HIMSELF THOROUGHLY. DURING THE CONFERENCE, SEVERAL STRANDS OF HIS PERSONAL POLITICAL THOUGHT BECAME EVIDENT, STRANDS WHICH WERE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT WE KNOW

OF HIM.

3. ZIA REPEATED TWO THEMES DURING THE CONFERENCE - THE NEED FOR "GRACE" AND THE NECESSITY OF ACCOUNTABILITY. HE DEFINED GRACE AS MAGNANIMITY AND REITERATED HIS CONCERN OVER THE DEEP AND EMOTIONAL DIVISIONS IN THE COUNTRY, NOTING THERE WERE FORCES WHO WANTED THE ARMY TO TAKE PUNITIVE ACTION AGAINST WRONGDOERS. HE CONCLUDED, HOWEVER, THAT A TIME OF HEALING WAS NEEDED AND THE MILITARY MUST EXHIBIT "GRACE" IF THE COUNTRY WERE TO SURVIVE AND PROSPER.

4. THE MILITARY SIDE OF HIS PERSONALITY CAME OUT IN HIS STATEMENT THAT THE ONLY WAY PAKISTAN CAN EMERGE A STRONGER NATION FROM THE POLITICAL CRISIS IS FOR EVERYONE TO BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS AND WORK. IN A COMMENT SELDOM HEARD BUT ACCURATE, ZIA SAID THAT ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL DIFFICULTIES PAKISTAN FACES IS THAT THE PEOPLE ARE NOT ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS. HE NOTED THAT WORKERS DEMAND 40 HOURS PAY FOR 18 HOURS WORK, AND FACTORY OWNERS WANT TO PAY SUBSISTENCE WAGES FOR MAXIMUM WORK.

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5. ZIA'S TWO MAJOR EXCURSIONS OVERSEAS AFFECTED HIM AND COLOR HIS VIEWS OF THE WORLD. HE HAS BEEN TO THE STATES TWICE, ATTENDING THE COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE AT FORT LEAVENWORTH AND AN ARMORED COURSE AT FORT KNOX. HE IS UNABASHEDLY PRO-AMERICAN AND LAUDATORY OF MANY THINGS AMERICAN. HE IS NOT OBSEQUIOUS TO THE US; RATHER, HE SAW MUCH IN THE STATES HE ADMIRES AND DOES NOT HIDE HIS FRIENDSHIP FOR AMERICA AND AMERICANS. THIS IS REFLECTED IN HIS EMPHASIS ON THE DESIRABILITY OF AMERICAN EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY AND HIS INTEREST IN INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF TRAINING PAKISTANI OFFICERS RECEIVE IN THE STATES.

6. ZIA WAS ALSO AFFECTED BY HIS NEARLY THREE YEARS IN JORDAN. HE SERVED THERE DURING THE STRUGGLES WITH THE PALESTINIANS, ADVISED THE ROYAL FAMILY ON MILITARY MATTERS, AND CONSIDERS THE KING, AND ESPECIALLY THE CROWN PRINCE, AS CLOSE PERSONAL FRIENDS. ONE OF THE FIRST CALLS HE RECEIVED FROM ABROAD AFTER THE ARMY TAKEOVER WAS FROM THE CROWN PRINCE. HIS EXPERIENCE IN JORDAN AND HIS STRICT ISLAMIC IDENTITY MAKE HIM A STRONG SUPPORTER OF ARAB CAUSES.

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 7479

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

7. ZIA HAS SAID THAT ISLAM IS CENTRAL TO HIS LIFE. ALL PAKISTANI POLITICIANS AND PUBLIC FIGURES PAY OBEISANCE TO ISLAM, BUT THEIR DEDICATION TO THE FAITH IS OFTEN TINGED WITH EXPEDIENCY AND HYPOCRISY. ZIA IS A TRUE BELIEVER. HE PRAYS FIVE TIMES A DAY, HAS MADE THE HAJ AND DOES NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES. (WHEN HE ACTIVELY SUPPORTED THE BAN ON DRINKING IN THE OFFICERS' MESSES, THE OFFICER CORPS, IMBUED WITH BRITISH TRADITION, SHUDDERED.) HIS MOVE TO INTRODUCE ISLAMIC PUNISHMENTS FOR CRIMES SHOULD BE SEEN NOT AS AN EXPEDIENT POLITICAL MOVE BUT RATHER AS A VSFLECTION OF HIS OWN CONVICTIONS. HE IS NOT RABID OR ZEALOUS IN HIS FAITH; BUT HIS ADHERENCE TO ISLAM IS INTENSE.
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8. ZIA KNOWS HE OWES HIS PRESENT POSITION TO THE MAN HE REMOVED

FROM OFFICE, ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO, AND THE IRONY AND DANGERS OF THAT SITUATION ARE NOT LOST ON HIM. SOME IN THE MILITARY QUESTION HIS ABILITY TO LEAD THE ARMED FORCES, ASSERTING HE IS TAINTED BY ASSOCIATION WITH BHUTTO. MANY PAKISTANIS HARBOR SUSPICIONS HE HAS BEEN LENIENT WITH THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER BECAUSE OF THE CAREER DEBT HE OWES BHUTTO. WE BELIEVE ZIA'S PROTESTATIONS THAT HE ACTED WITHOUT BHUTTO'S ACQUIESCENCE, BUT, AS NOTED IN SEPTEL, HIS PROBLEMS AS HE PREPARES FOR ELECTIONS CAN ONLY BE EXACERBATED BY THE BHUTTO CONNECTION.

9. ZIA IS PERSONALLY AFFABLE, UPBEAT AND CHARMING. HE HAS NOT YET ASSUMED THE TRAPPINGS OF OFFICE NOR THE RETAINERS AND SYCOPHANTS THAT NORMALLY SURROUND A RULER IN PAKISTAN. WE BELIEVE HE IS STILL SINCERE IN HIS DESIRE TO TURN OVER POWER TO AN ELECTED CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IN OCTOBER. HE MAY NOT, HOWEVER, APPRECIATE THE ENORMITY OF THE TASK HE HAS SET FOR HIMSELF. HIS CONFIDENCE THAT AFTER A COOLING-OFF PERIOD THE POLITICIANS CAN WORK TOGETHER IN A SPIRIT OF CONSTRUCTIVE COMPETITION DOES NOT REFLECT PAKISTAN'S TRADITIONS OR TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE BITTERNESS ENGENDERED DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS. HIS CONTENTION THAT HE COULD REMAIN AS CHIEF OF STAFF AFTER A NEW GOVERNMENT IS INSTALLED EITHER SHOWS CONSIDERABLE NAIVETE OR FOOLHARDINESS. WHEN ASKED WHAT HE WOULD DO IF BHUTTO WON THE ELECTIONS, ZIA REPLIED THAT "OBVIOUSLY, HE WOULD BECOME PRIME MINISTER, I WOULD REMAIN CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF, AND I WOULD SALUTE HIM EVEN MORE SMARLY THAN BEFORE." SUCH A STATEMENT IGNORES THE REALITIES OF BHUTTO'S PENCHANT FOR VENGEANCE ON THOSE WHO CROSS HIM.

10. ZIA HAS BENEFITED FROM THE PUBLIC APPROBATION WHICH GREETED THE MILITARY TAKEOVER AND THE POPULAR ACCEPTANCE OF HIS PROMISE TO HOLD ELECTIONS AS SCHEDULED. HIS ATTEMPT TO CLEAN THE AUGEAN
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STABLES OF PAKISTAN POLITICS IN 90 DAYS IS COMMENDABLE AND MOST IN PAKISTAN HOPE HE WILL SUCCEED. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE HE WILL, HOWEVER, AND THE ASSURED GENERAL MAY SOON FACE DIFFICULT POLITICAL CHOICES OF THE KIND HE HAD HOPED TO AVOID.
HUMMEL

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